(b) whether any survey has been conducted in regard to illegal publication and sale of Government Publications by private publishers;

(c) if so, the findings thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to curb such illegal trade practices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) Information is being collected from the Department of Personnel and Training and the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Advance Ruling Authority

2695. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up an advance ruling authority for customs and excise and a directorate of valuation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the justification for setting up such bodies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) There is no proposal as yet to set up any advance ruling authority. However, a Directorate of Valuation (Customs & Central Excise) has been set up at Mumbai vide an Order dt. 2.6.97.

(b) and (c) The Directorate of Valuation will initially concentrate on issues relating to under valuation and valuation frauds in the context of customs valuation of imported goods. Subsequently, it will also look into the aspects of central excise valuation. The Directorate would disseminate information with regard to international prices to various customs formations and monitor the valuation practices. Presently, a Commissioner level officer heads the Directorate and he is assisted by a compliment of staff. The Directorate has been set up in an effort to tackle under valuation and valuation frauds, particularly in relation to imports, with the purpose of having greater intelligence in customs valuation matters and to check manipulation in customs valuation.

[Translation]

Amlo Project

2696. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of sensational robbery incident in Amlo project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the vigilance wing of the Central Coal Fields Ltd. has started enquiry into this;

(d) whether the enquiry has since been completed; and

(e) if so, the number of departmental officers and other persons against whom action has been taken/ propposed to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) On 5th July, 1994 at about 1.30 a.m. four robbers entered into the Cash Section of Amlo Project office of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) by overpowering the security guard on duty at the main gate. The robbers entered into the strong room, broke open the safe and cash boxes inside the safe and took away an amount of Rs. 7.5 Lakhs approximately.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) A First Information Report has been lodged with the Bermo Police Station. Moreover, major penalty proceedings have been initiated against five executives and six non-executives of CCL on various charges of negligence in duty.

[English]

Circular to Honour Bhansali Cheques

2697. SHRI SANAT MEHTA:

SHRI AJAY MUKHOPADHYAY:

Will the Minister of FINNACE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item appearing in the Statesman, Calcutta dated June 17, 1997 captioned "CGM asked all SBI branches to honour Bhansali cheques;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether a circular was issued as alleged, on Feb. 13, 1997 by the Cheif General Manager of State Bank of India, Mumbai circle; and

(d) if so, the content of the circular and its administrative propriety?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) State Bank of India (SBI) has informed that according to the bank's normal practice, a circular was issued after approval of the facility of 'at par' encashment of fixed deposit refund orders/interest warrants/brokerage warrants to CRB capital Markets Ltd. by the concerned sanctioning authourity (in this case the Deputy General Manager of Mumbai Main Branch of the bank). The Circular was issued by the Banking Operations Department, Mumbai Local Head Office under the signature of the Circle Financial Officer. All circular instructions, after sanction at appropriate levels, are issued with the legend "for Chief